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MACROECONOMIC POLICY QUESTIONS: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Second Committee (Part IV)*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 95 (see A/52/626, para. 2). Action on sub-item (c) was taken at the 17th and 48th meetings, on 24 October and 5 December 1997. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/52/SR.17 and 48).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/52/L.3 AND L.47

2. At the 17th meeting, on 24 October, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Science and technology for development" (A/C.2/52/L.3), which read:

"The General Assembly,

"Reaffirming the continuing validity of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development,[1] adopted in 1979, its resolution

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in five parts, under the symbol A/52/626 and Add.1-4.

[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, Vienna, 20-31 August 1979 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.I.21 and corrigenda), chap. VII.

50/101 of 20 December 1995, and all other relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, as well as the outcomes of United Nations major conferences concerning science and technology for development,

"Taking note of the outcome of the Meeting of Experts on Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Cartagena, Colombia, in March 1997, in the field of biological diversity,

"Recognizing the importance for developing countries of having access to science and technology so as to enhance their productivity and competitiveness in the world market,

"Stressing the need to promote, facilitate and finance access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the corresponding know-how to the developing countries, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, and stressing also that the transfer of technology would contribute to meeting the developing countries' obligations agreed to at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in the relevant international conventions,

"Expressing concern over the further marginalization of developing countries in the process of globalization which has resulted in increased benefits from advances in science and technology and stressing the need for Governments and international development institutions to facilitate the transfer of privately owned technologies on concessional terms to developing countries,

"Noting the initiative by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to convene, in 1999, a world science conference,

"Recognizing that information technologies are important requisites for planning, development and decision-making in science and technology, and recognizing also their far-reaching implications for society,

"Reaffirming that the United Nations should play a central role in, and give the highest priority to, cooperation in science and technology, and in the enhancement of support and assistance to developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, and emphasizing the need to strengthen the United Nations organizations with a mandate in the field of science and technology, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,

"Noting the work being undertaken by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its work programme for member States, especially the developing countries, and reaffirming its unique role as a global forum for the examination of science and technology questions, for the improvement of the understanding of science and technology policies and for the formulation of recommendations and guidelines on science and technology matters within the United Nations system, all in relation to development,

"Expressing its profound concern over the continued inadequacy of resources for fostering science and technology for development, and the lack of political will on the part of the developed countries in fulfilling their commitments in this respect,

"Recognizing the need for Governments, and regional and international bodies to take measures to ensure women better access to and participation within scientific and technological areas, especially where they are not represented or are under-represented,

"Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on macroeconomic policy questions: science and technology for development,[2]

"1. Endorses Economic and Social Council decision 1997/306 of 25 July 1997, adopted at its substantive session of 1997 on the basis of the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its third session;[3]

"2. Also endorses the ongoing work of the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, with the support of the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, emphasizes the importance of the activities that are to be pursued within the framework of the Commission, including a broad spectrum of new global challenges in science and technology, and encourages donors to support these undertakings; and, in this regard, encourages the Commission to expand, to the extent possible, the scope of its deliberations on the theme 'Science and technology partnerships and networking for national capacity-building' for the inter-sessional period 1997-1999;

"3. Reaffirms that capacity-building in science and technology in developing countries should constitute a priority issue in the United Nations agenda, and urges that international cooperation efforts be intensified and strengthened towards developing countries' endogenous capacity-building in science and technology, including their capacity to utilize scientific and technological developments from abroad as well as to modify and adapt them to suit local conditions, with the recommendation that the United Nations should play in future an ever-increasing role in these processes and the development of a new generation of environmentally sound technologies;

"4. Stresses the urgent need to strengthen the vital role of the United Nations in the field of science and technology as a cross-cutting concern within the work of the United Nations, particularly through effective policy guidance and better coordination, including international cooperation in technology assessment, monitoring and forecasting, and calls upon the organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations to work

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[2] A/52/320.

[3] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 11 (E/1997/31).

in a coordinated manner to develop a catalogue of proved technologies to enable effective choice, by developing countries, of state-of-the-art technologies;

"5. Calls upon the international community, particularly developed countries and international organizations, to fulfil all their commitments as affirmed in chapter 34 of Agenda 21,[4] as well as in the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly;

"6. Expresses the need for the provision of financial resources on a continuous and assured basis to the developing countries as regards their acquiring technology for development including environmentally sound technologies, in accordance with the provisions of Agenda 21, the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, and an agenda for development[5] as well as other relevant United Nations instruments;

"7. Emphasizes that the barriers to and restrictions on the transfer of technology to developing countries, including new technology regimes established unilaterally and/or plurilaterally, should be identified and removed while creating incentives, fiscal and otherwise, for the transfer of such technologies; expresses its concern over the fact that the developing countries are increasingly facing obstacles in respect of accessing new technologies, with export restrictions being put in place on various pretexts; and emphasizes that intellectual property rights regimes should not increase the cost of technology transfer to developing countries;

"8. Recognizes the importance of cooperation among developing countries in the field of science and technology, building on their complementarities, and that the need to further advance such cooperation, through the establishment and/or strengthening of national technology and information centres in developing countries and their networking on regional, subregional, interregional and global levels to promote technology research, development and dissemination among themselves, further calls for cooperation between universities and research institutions, and urges the international community to support such initiatives through financial and technical assistance;

"9. Reiterates the affirmation of the General Assembly, as put forth in paragraph 93 of the annex to its resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997, that the creation of centres for the transfer of technology at various levels could greatly contribute to achieving the objective of transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, and that, for this purpose, cooperation between existing United Nations bodies and

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[4] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[5] See document A/AC.250/1 (Parts I, II and III), annex.

mechanisms with a mandate in this field, including technical cooperation among developing countries, economic cooperation among developing countries, the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the regional commissions, should be promoted;

"10. Welcomes Economic and Social Council decision 1997/306 of 25 July 1997 in which the Council approved the provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, one of whose items is entitled 'Common vision on the future of science and technology for development on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary (in 1999) of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development';

"11. Stresses the important role that the United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development should play in enhancing endogenous capacity-building in science and technology in developing countries, and also stresses that additional measures by the United Nations for purposes of enhancing the ability of the developing countries to address their pressing needs in this sector are a necessity;

"12. Invites the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to assess their capability to provide assistance and promote cooperation in the area of information and communication technologies, and to suggest areas in which they are best able to assist developing countries in the design and implementation of national strategies on such technologies;

"13. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At the 48th meeting, on 5 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Adel Abdellatif (Egypt), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Science and technology for development" (A/C.2/52/L.47), which was submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.3.

4. The representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and Luxembourg (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) orally corrected the text.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.47 (see para. 7).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.47, draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.3 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Science and technology for development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the continuing validity of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development,[6] adopted in 1979, its resolution 50/101 of 20 December 1995 and all other relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, as well as the outcomes of United Nations major conferences concerning science and technology for development,

Taking note of the Meeting of Experts on Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Cartagena, Colombia, in March 1997, in the field of biological diversity,

Recognizing the importance for developing countries of having access to science and technology so as to enhance their productivity and competitiveness in the world market, and stressing the need to promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the corresponding know-how, in particular to the developing countries, on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries,

Stressing, given the fact that much of the most advanced environmentally sound technology is developed and held by the private sector, that the creation of an enabling environment, on the part of both developed and developing countries, including supportive economic and fiscal measures, as well as a practical system of environmental regulations and compliance mechanisms, can help to stimulate private-sector investment in and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, as affirmed by the General Assembly in paragraph 90 of the annex to its resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997,

Also stressing that further efforts should be made by Governments and international development institutions to facilitate the transfer of privately owned technologies on concessional terms as mutually agreed, to developing countries, especially least developed countries, as affirmed by the General Assembly in paragraph 90 of the annex to its resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997,

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[6] Report of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, Vienna, 20-31 August 1979 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.I.21 and corrigenda), chap. VII.

Expressing concern over the risk of marginalization of many developing countries, in particular the least developed and the African countries, in the process of globalization, which has resulted in increased benefits from advances in science and technology,

Recognizing the importance of developing countries' own efforts in the field of science and technology for development,

Noting the proposal by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to convene, in 1999, a world science conference,

Recognizing that information technologies are important requisites for planning, development and decision-making in science and technology, and recognizing also their far-reaching implications for society,

Reaffirming that the United Nations should play an important role in the promotion of cooperation in science and technology, as one of its priorities, and in the enhancement of support and assistance to developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, and emphasizing the need to enhance the capability of the relevant United Nations organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to address relevant issues in the field of science and technology,

Noting the work being undertaken by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its work programme for member States, especially the developing countries, and reaffirming its unique role as a global forum for examining science and technology questions, improving the understanding of science and technology policies, and formulating recommendations and guidelines on science and technology matters within the United Nations system, all in relation to development, without prejudice to the Economic and Social Council review of its subsidiary bodies, as initiated under General Assembly resolution 50/227, bearing in mind other relevant Assembly resolutions,

Recognizing the need for adequate resources to be devoted to fostering science and technology for development,

Recognizing the need for Governments, and regional and international bodies to take measures to ensure women better access to and participation in scientific and technological areas, especially where they are not represented or are under-represented,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Macroeconomic policy questions: science and technology for development",[7]

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[7] A/52/320.

1. Reaffirms Economic and Social Council decision 1997/306 of 25 July 1997, in which the Council approved the provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the basis of the report of the Commission on its third session;[8]

2. Recognizes the ongoing work of the Commission for Science and Technology for Development, emphasizes the importance of the activities that are to be pursued within the framework of the Commission, including a broad spectrum of new global challenges in science and technology, encourages support to those undertakings and, in that regard, reaffirms that the substantive theme for the inter-sessional period 1997-1999 of the Commission will be "Science and technology partnerships and networking for national capacity-building";

3. Reaffirms that capacity-building in science and technology in developing countries should remain a priority issue on the United Nations agenda, and urges that international cooperation efforts be intensified and strengthened towards developing countries' endogenous capacity-building in science and technology, including their capacity to utilize scientific and technological developments from abroad as well as to modify and adapt them to suit local conditions;

4. Also recognizes the role of Governments in science and technology for development, in particular in providing appropriate regulatory frameworks and incentives for the development of science and technology capabilities;

5. Further recognizes the role of the private sector in science and technology for development, in particular in the transfer and development of science and technology capabilities;

6. Stresses the need to strengthen the important role of the United Nations in the field of science and technology as a cross-cutting concern within the work of the United Nations, particularly through effective policy guidance and better coordination, including international cooperation in technology assessment, monitoring and forecasting, as well as in the area of information and communication technologies, and in providing an environment conducive to the development of new environmentally sound technologies, and calls upon the organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations to continue to work in a coordinated and expeditious manner to develop a catalogue of proved technologies to enable effective technology choice, by developing countries, of state-of-the-art technologies;

7. Reaffirms the need to fulfil the commitments on the provision of financial resources and transfer of technology contained in chapter 34 of

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[8] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 11 (E/1997/31).

Agenda 21,[9] the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly and the Agenda for Development;[10]

8. Reaffirms the need for adequate financial resources on a continuous and assured basis to foster science and technology for development, in particular to promote endogenous capacity-building in developing countries in accordance with their priorities;

9. Stresses that the current forms of cooperation involving the public and private sectors of developing and developed countries should be built upon and expanded, and in that context, also stresses the importance of identifying barriers and restrictions to the transfer of publicly and privately owned technologies, as affirmed by the General Assembly in paragraph 88 of the annex to its resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997 as well as other relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions, with a view to reducing such constraints while creating specific incentives, fiscal and otherwise, for the transfer of such technologies;

10. Recognizes the importance of cooperation among developing countries in the field of science and technology, building on their complementarities, and the need for further advancing such cooperation through the establishment and/or strengthening of national technology and information centres in developing countries and networking on regional, subregional, interregional and global levels to promote technology research, training and dissemination as well as joint projects in developing countries, and urges the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations and programmes to provide continued and enhanced support through technical assistance and financing for such efforts;

11. Reiterates the affirmation of the General Assembly, as set forth in paragraph 93 of the annex to its resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997, that the creation of centres for the transfer of technology at various levels, including the regional level, could greatly contribute to achieving the objective of transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, and that, for that purpose, existing United Nations bodies and mechanisms, including, as appropriate, mechanisms for technical and environmental cooperation among developing countries, the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the regional commissions, should cooperate;

12. Invites the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to assess their capability to provide assistance and promote cooperation in the area of information and communication technologies, and to suggest areas in which they

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[9] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[10] Resolution 51/240, annex.

are best able to assist interested countries, in particular the developing countries, in the design and implementation of national strategies on such technologies;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.